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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA: The South Vietnamese task force is withdrawing. (Page 2)

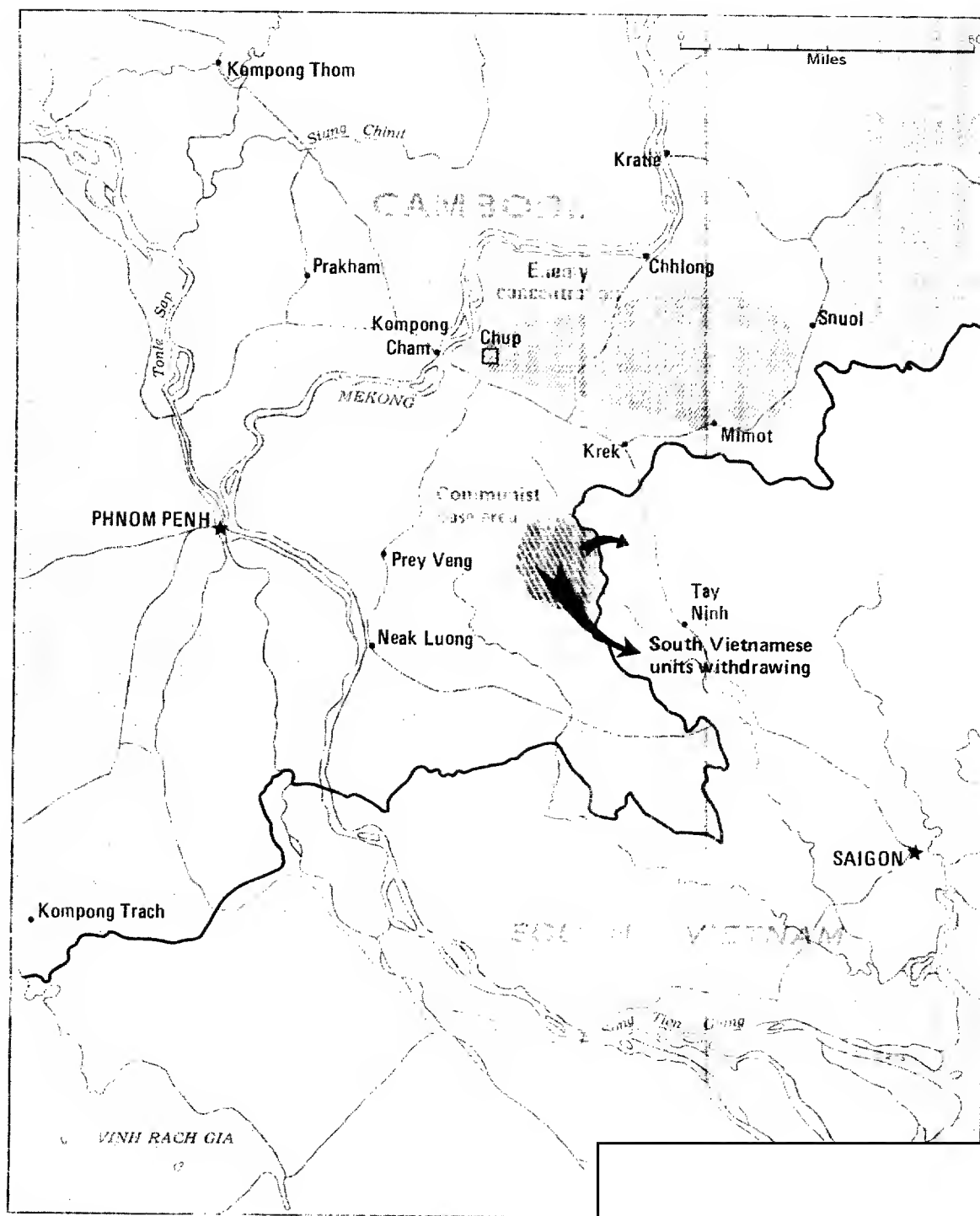


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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA: The South Vietnamese are ending their drive against Communist base complexes and supply dumps in southeast Cambodia.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Two of the five battalions in the task force have been withdrawn and additional units are to follow within a few days. The operation, which began on 9 March, has uncovered large supplies of weapons and food. Heavy air strikes and artillery attacks supporting the ground operations have killed upwards of 750 Communist troops.

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[REDACTED] valid reason probably was the recent increase in enemy action in Tay Ninh Province on the South Vietnamese side of the border, where the Communists carried out a number of heavy shellings. General Minh, the government's Military Region (MR) 3 commander who presumably ordered the withdrawal, regards his main job as protection of the areas surrounding Saigon. In the past he has withdrawn South Vietnamese units from Cambodia on short notice when enemy action heated up within his area.

The likelihood that there are additional large caches that have not been uncovered may encourage General Minh to return some units to this area of Cambodia later on. For the time being, however, he apparently intends to maintain a strong defensive force in MR 3 to discourage the Communist units in Cambodia from attacking.

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